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Selected Speeches and News Releases

August 16 - August 23, 1990

IN THIS ISSUE:

News Releases—

USDA Announces Prevailing World Market Price for Upland Cotton

N.Y. Meat Firm and President Fined \$20,000 for Inspection Violations

Kentucky Firm Officials Convicted on Felony Charges for Mislabeled Meat Products

Michigan Meat Firm, Officials Fined \$15,000 for Meat Violations

Getting the Scoop on U.S. Ice Cream Exports

Growing French Taste for Fruit Juice is Sweet News for U.S. Exporters

USDA Proposes Amending Regulations on Reporting Tobacco Stocks

Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia Selected for Agricultural Trade Mission

Research Highlights, Priorities Noted

U.S. Wheat Products Score in Japanese Market

Caz Sniffs Out Costly Animal Pest

FGIS Sunflower Oil Calibration Program Found to be on the Mark

USDA Announces Prevailing World Market Rice Prices

Foreign Fungus Takes on Major U.S. Crop Pest

USDA Issues Report on Covered Hopper Railcar Ownership

Continued on inside front cover.

News Releases Continued.

First Timber Bridge Awards Competition Announced

Trinidad and Tobago Eligible for Wheat Under EEP

USDA Conference, Nov. 27-29, to Assess Farm Prospects for 1991

This Week's Honey-Loan Repayment Levels Unchanged

USDA Announces Meeting of Scrapie Negotiated Rulemaking Advisory Committee

News Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Public Affairs

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, Aug. 16—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (micronaire 3.5-4.9) upland cotton (base quality) and the coarse count adjustment in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, Aug. 17, through midnight Thursday, Aug. 23.

Since the adjusted world price (AWP) is above the 1988, 1989, and 1990 crop base quality loan rates of 51.80, 50.00 and 50.27 cents per pound, respectively, the loan repayment rates for the 1988, 1989 and 1990 crops of upland cotton during this period are equal to the respective loan rates for the specific quality and location.

The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates. Because the AWP in effect is above the established loan rate, loan deficiency payments are not available for 1990-crop upland cotton sold during this period.

Based on data for the week ending Aug. 16, the AWP for upland cotton and the coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

Chart on next page.

Adjusted World Price

 Northern Europe Price 80.54

 Adjustments:

 Average U.S. spot market location 13.22

 SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton 2.15

 Average U.S. location 0.35

 Sum of Adjustments -15.72

 ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE 64.82 cents/lb.

Coarse Count Adjustment

 Northern Europe Price 80.54

 Northern Europe Coarse Count Price -77.35

 3.19

 Adjustment to SLM 1-inch cotton -4.10

 -0.91

 COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT 0 cents/lb.

The next AWP and coarse count adjustment announcement will be made on Thursday, Aug. 23.

Charles Cunningham (202) 447-7954

#

N.Y. MEAT FIRM AND PRESIDENT FINED \$20,000 FOR INSPECTION VIOLATIONS

WASHINGTON, Aug. 17—A federal court has fined Melbur Provision, Inc., of Brooklyn, N.Y., and its president, Louis Fishman, \$10,000 each for violating federal inspection laws, according to Dr. Lester M. Crawford, administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service.

On July 27, the U.S. District Court of Eastern New York convicted the firm on one felony count for transporting and distributing approximately 2,000 pounds of pork products contaminated by rodent feces and gnaw marks. Louis Fishman was convicted on one misdemeanor count for allowing nearly 500 pounds of turkey products to become contaminated in the same manner. Fishman pled guilty to charges against him and the firm.

On two occasions in 1986, FSIS officials found violations in the facility during routine inspection. These findings led to the convictions, Crawford said.

FSIS and its 9,000 employees ensure that meat and poultry products are safe, wholesome and accurately labeled.

Jim Greene (202) 382-0314

#

KENTUCKY FIRM OFFICIALS CONVICTED ON FELONY CHARGES FOR MISLABLED MEAT PRODUCTS

WASHINGTON, Aug. 17—A federal court has convicted Alvin J. Shuckman, president of Shuckman's Meat Company, Inc., of Louisville, Ky., and Gene Hardin, sales manager of the company, of one felony count each for selling misbranded ground beef patties. Both individuals pled guilty.

On July 30, the U.S. District Court of Western Kentucky fined Shuckman \$3,000, placed Shuckman and Hardin on three years probation, and ordered both to perform 100 hours of community services. Each had to pay \$138.25 in restitution to a consignee for a shipment of adulterated products.

Shuckman and Hardin sold mislabeled ground beef patties that contained soy protein and added water, with the intent to defraud, according to Dr. Lester M. Crawford, administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service.

"Our laboratory analysis confirmed the presence of these ingredients," said Crawford. "Federal regulations require that ground beef patties containing soy protein be prominently labeled to reflect the presence of that ingredient."

FSIS sets standards for ingredients that can be used in meat and poultry products, and ensures that these products are safe, wholesome and accurately labeled.

Jim Greene (202) 382-0314

#

MICHIGAN MEAT FIRM, OFFICIALS FINED \$15,000 FOR MEAT VIOLATIONS

WASHINGTON, Aug. 17—A federal court has fined Meat King, Inc., of Detroit, Mich., \$11,100, and its president, Alan Gluck, and manager, Michael Gluck, \$2,000, each for offering for sale spoiled delicatessen or luncheon meats.

On July 24, the U.S. District Court of Detroit convicted the firm and Alan and Michael Gluck of two misdemeanor charges each for violating the Federal Meat Inspection Act. The Glucks pled guilty to all charges, according to Dr. Lester M. Crawford, administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service.

The charges were brought against the firm and its officials after FSIS compliance officers found violations at the facility during routine reviews. On three different occasions in 1986, 1987 and 1989, federal officials found spoiled, decomposed luncheon meats, unfit for human consumption, being offered for sale.

The Food Safety and Inspection Service and its 9,000 employees ensure that meat and poultry products are safe, wholesome and accurately labeled.

Jim Greene (202) 382-0314

#

GETTING THE SCOOP ON U.S. ICE CREAM EXPORTS

WASHINGTON—From Tokyo's Ginza to the Eiffel Tower, U.S. ice cream is hot. Last year, overseas customers licked and slurped their way through \$9.4 million worth of U.S. ice cream exports, according to an article in the September issue of AgExporter Magazine, published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service.

In the article, FAS economists David Young and Ron Verdonk explain how U.S. sales to foreign markets tripled in volume and value over the past five years, with further increases expected this year.

“With close to 1.4 billion gallons produced and annual per capita consumption of 45 pints, the United States is still its own best customer and the largest single market for ice cream worldwide,” say Young and Verdonk. “But U.S. ice cream exporters are turning their eyes and scoops on the export market.”

The booming and burgeoning economies of the Pacific Rim in Asia offer the greatest market potential for U.S. ice cream sales. Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan have been the largest Asian markets for U.S. ice cream over the past five years.

“The Japanese market appears to offer the greatest potential for a more immediate increase in U.S. ice cream exports to Asia in the near future,” say Young and Verdonk. Past sales to Japan were limited by an import quota set at 110 metric tons. However, on April 1, 1990, the Japanese eliminated the quota for both ice cream and frozen yogurt as part of an agreement signed by the United States and Japan in August 1988 that eliminated some quotas on certain agricultural products.

A number of U.S. firms are exploring market development possibilities in Japan. U.S. sales of ice cream to Japan averaged just over 200,000 liters, valued at \$200,000, annually during 1985-89.

Given the hot climate and large numbers of U.S. and European tourists, the Caribbean market is also a natural one for U.S. ice cream, according to Young and Verdonk. Sales in this region have grown in tandem with the increases in tourism revenues. U.S. exports to the Caribbean almost tripled in value from 1985 to 1989. Given the outlook for increased tourism, U.S. ice cream exports to this region should continue to grow.

In Mexico, sales of U.S. ice cream rose to \$700,000 in 1989, up from virtually nothing in previous years. The elimination of Mexico’s import permit requirement, a lower duty of 20 percent and increased ice cream consumption nationwide spurred by advertising campaigns have helped boost U.S. sales.

U.S. ice cream sales to Europe have been more sporadic compared with sales to other markets. Exports to France were virtually nonexistent until 1989, when U.S. suppliers sold \$500,000 to French importers. West German imports of U.S. ice cream reached \$1 million in 1988 but declined to about half that amount last year.

“In general, ice cream consumption is positively correlated with income levels,” say Young and Verdonk. “The more developed an economy is, the more likely the market is to being an already existing or potential consumer.” The authors also point out that exporters should look at a country’s rate of private ownership of refrigerators and existing distribution channels in order to determine whether a given market can import on a bulk or single-serve basis and whether sales are more likely to take place in supermarkets or through specialized shops.

U.S. suppliers have devoted some attention to international trade, but as in so many other newly discovered potential export product arenas, U.S. ice cream manufacturers can benefit most through sustained and thorough marketing. The authors describe how the National Dairy Products Promotion Board, a participant in the Foreign Agricultural Service's cooperator program, plans to undertake an aggressive market research program, consumer and food service surveys and market trend studies for dairy products. The Board plans to focus its efforts on marketing opportunities in Japan and the Pacific Rim countries. In addition, regional cooperators and state marketing divisions can provide export support.

Lynn K. Goldsborough (202) 382-9442
Issued Aug. 17, 1990

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GROWING FRENCH TASTE FOR FRUIT JUICE IS SWEET NEWS FOR U.S. EXPORTERS

WASHINGTON—Sitting at a chic outdoor cafe on the Champs Elysees, a health-conscious French consumer these days may be more likely to drink a glass of juice than a glass of wine. U.S. fruit juice exporters are reaping the benefits of this latest trend, according to an article in the September issue of AgExporter Magazine, published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service.

“U.S. juice sales to France during 1985-88 jumped nearly 40 percent to \$10.7 million. Grapefruit juice, in particular, is well-positioned in the French market due to its high-quality image,” say Edwin Porter and Martine Brunet, the authors of the article. Porter is the U.S. agricultural attache in Paris and Brunet is a marketing specialist in his office.

Both say an increasing demand for healthy food products and a decline in alcoholic beverage consumption are driving forces behind a growing fruit juice market in France. Over the past decade, French consumption of fruit juice products, including nectars, increased about 79 percent to an estimated 347 million liters in 1989.

At 5.7 liters per capita, consumption of fruit juice products in France is well below that of neighboring northern European Community countries, and the market for fruit juices is far from saturated. Consumption is expected to increase 5 to 10 percent annually through 1993.

Porter and Brunet report orange is the best-selling fruit juice flavor in France. The major purchasers are young, urban women. Prime juice-drinking time are the summer months. And the most popular packaging is one-liter paper cartons.

“The best opportunities for U.S. exporters are high-quality orange and grapefruit juices in bulk and in glass jars as well as navel orange concentrate,” say Porter and Brunet. “Juice in glass containers commands a higher price than juice sold in paper cartons.”

The French market for fruit juice products is almost totally dependent on imports. Citrus juices and concentrates were the major juice imports. Orange juice represented 80 percent of the volume and 81 percent of the value of imported citrus juices and concentrates in 1988. The share of grapefruit juice and concentrates was more modest (16 percent of volume and 13 percent of value), but is steadily growing in importance.

“U.S. fruit juice exports to France have been on the uptrend since 1985, increasing 39 percent by volume between 1985 and 1988,” say Porter and Brunet. “In 1988, the United States shipped to France 10,798 tons of fruit juices and concentrates, worth \$11.2 million, of which orange juice and orange concentrate accounted for \$7.95 million.”

Grapefruit juice and concentrate accounted for 3,077 tons or 28 percent of the total volume of U.S. fruit juice and concentrate exports to France in 1988. In both volume and value terms, the United States was the second largest supplier of grapefruit juice and concentrate to France in 1988, accounting for 15 percent of total French grapefruit juice and concentrate imports by volume and 14 percent by value.

Most U.S. orange and grapefruit juice is shipped to France in 1-liter glass jars. The bulk of U.S. fruit juice exports to France face the customary EC import duty of 42 percent for concentrates and 19 percent for single-strength juices. However, as in previous years, under a preferential tariff quota, the United States will be able to export 1,500 tons of orange juice to France in 1990 at a 13-percent duty.

Foreign brands can be found in most segments of the French fruit juice market. “In 1988, the U.S. brand Tropicana accounted for about 10 percent of the total volume of French fruit juice sales in glass jars,” report Porter and Brunet. Tropicana was the largest supplier of grapefruit juice sold in glass jars and the third largest supplier of orange juice sold in glass jars in France in 1988.

In the AgExporter article, Porter and Brunet detail the marketing channels and competition for imported juices in France, and tell where U.S. exporters can get lists of French fruit juice importers.

Lynn K. Goldsbrough (202) 382-9442

Issued Aug. 20, 1990

#

USDA PROPOSES AMENDING REGULATIONS ON REPORTING TOBACCO STOCKS

WASHINGTON, Aug. 20—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is proposing to amend sections of its regulations implementing the federal Tobacco Statistics Act as they apply to imported tobacco. The act requires annual gathering and publication of the amounts and kinds of tobacco on hand in the United States and Puerto Rico.

Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the proposals would:

- identify cigar leaf not by country of origin but by function (i.e., wrapper, filler and binder) as domestic cigar leaf is identified;
- add "fire-cured" and "dark air-cured" designations for which data would be reported;
- provide for collection of data on sheet and stem tobacco;
- refine certain categories on the reporting form.

"Inspection of imported tobacco already uses a number of these proposed changes, and their incorporation into the reporting regulations could ease the gathering of data accordingly," Haley said. Changes on the reporting form—essentially refinements of its categories—could provide more specific and comprehensive data, and would bring the form in line with current industry practices and terminology, he said.

The proposals will appear as a proposed rule in the Aug. 21 Federal Register. Comments postmarked no later than Oct. 22 should be sent to the director, Tobacco Division, Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA, AMS, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; telephone (202) 447-2567. Copies of the proposed rule are available at that address.

Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179

#

BULGARIA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, YUGOSLAVIA SELECTED FOR AGRICULTURAL TRADE MISSION

WASHINGTON, Aug. 20—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced that a U.S. agricultural trade and development mission will visit Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.

The mission is tentatively scheduled for September 15-29. Members will include representatives from the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and State and the U.S. Agency for International Development. Three to six private sector representatives, yet to be selected, also will be part of the team. They will be chosen for their knowledge of U.S. export programs, as well as the food needs, trade potential and economics of the three countries. The mission's plan of action was discussed at a country strategy and program development workshop at USDA on July 11.

"These three countries imported more than \$200 million in U.S. agricultural commodities last year," Crowder said. "In addition, these markets represent good opportunities for increased U.S. exports, particularly for bulk commodities such as grains, soybeans and soybean meal."

Congress authorized the missions program in December 1987 to encourage greater U.S. private sector and foreign country participation in U.S. agricultural and development activities. The mission to Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia will bring the number of countries visited by U.S. missions to 17, fulfilling the legislative mandate of the program.

For more information on the missions program, contact Douglas Freeman, U.S. Coordinator, Agricultural Trade and Development Missions Program, Room 3058-South Building, Foreign Agricultural Service, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-1000; telephone (202) 382-0368.

Sally Klusaritz (202) 447-3448

#

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS, PRIORITIES NOTED

WASHINGTON, Aug. 20—Agricultural research is no longer a simple question of “one problem, one solution,” the head of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s chief research agency said today.

“We are seeing our research often go beyond addressing a single agricultural problem. What adds to farm income—such as a new use for a commodity—also can open up new businesses and even play a role in a nutritious diet,” said R. Dean Plowman, administrator of USDA’s Agricultural Research Service.

He said an example is the use of soluble oat fiber to make Oatrim, which can be used as an ingredient in dairy products and baked goods to lower fat and calories. Oatrim contains beta-glucan, an active component in lowering blood cholesterol.

Plowman’s comments came as the country observes “National Agricultural Research Week,” held Aug. 19-25 as designated by President Bush.

“An agricultural issue today can be an environmental, consumer and business issue,” he said. “That means increasingly we are combining various scientific expertise to find solutions.”

As an example, Plowman cited the agency’s research on sustainable agriculture. “This work addresses the issues of environmental protection,” he said, “keeping U.S. farm goods competitive by lowering production costs, helping provide a safe food supply for consumers by reducing chemical use and helping ensure the longevity of American agriculture.”

He said those issues are among top priority research areas for the agency, which has approximately 2,700 scientists at 123 locations nationwide and overseas.

Plowman reported on agency research that “could have multiple payoffs in the short term or the future.” This includes:

- growing plants in special carbon dioxide chambers to study possible effects on crops if CO₂ levels double in the next century as predicted. The findings could indicate long-term impact on agricultural supplies and farm income.

- a wide range of projects aimed at developing natural controls against crop pests and weeds, reducing reliance on agricultural chemicals and offering consumers a safer food supply. ARS researchers have traveled to Russia to seek natural enemies of the Russian wheat aphid, a pest that

costs U.S. wheat and barley growers more than \$100 million a year in losses and control measures. A fungus from Australia is being studied as a possible weapon against crop-gobbling grasshoppers in the West, and a virus has been identified as particularly effective against the gypsy moth that has defoliated forests in the East.

—developing a soybean variety resistant to leaf-feeding lepidopterous insects, including the insecticide-resistant soybean looper.

—discovery that lactose—milk sugar—can reduce *Salmonella* bacteria in infected poultry by 99.9 percent for just pennies per bird. This finding not only helps safeguard the livelihood of the nation's poultry producers, but also offers consumers safer poultry products.

—advances toward leaner meat products. Agency studies have shown that daily injections of a growth hormone cut pigs' fat by as much as 35 percent and boosted muscle protein nearly 20 percent, even though the pigs consumed 33 percent less feed per unit of weight. This gives pork producers an incentive to use the product, and also offers consumers leaner, healthier meat.

—discovery of a bacterium that helps stop mold-causing fungi on apples and pears. In tests, the bacterium stopped one fungus completely and reduced others by 80 percent. It could become an effective alternative to fungicides to stop fruit from spoiling, reducing production costs as well as the risk of chemical residues.

—advances in pre-selecting the sex of livestock. Quantity and quality of meat supplies could be increased, including leaner meat.

—discovery that methyl bromide will kill codling moths in apples, opening the important Japanese market to American apples. The Japanese, who import 40 percent of their fruit from the United States, had refused U.S. apples because of the possible presence of the moths, which are not found in Japan.

—use of a high-tech “gene gun” to insert genes into plants so crops can be tailored more precisely to market demands. Genes already have been successfully inserted into corn cells. Researchers now hope to nurture the altered cells into fertile plantlets capable of passing their new genes along to offspring.

Sandy Miller Hays (301) 344-4089

#

U.S. WHEAT PRODUCTS SCORE IN JAPANESE MARKET

WASHINGTON—Are the Japanese giving up rice crackers for Western-style angel food cake? Not entirely, but Japan's restrictive rice policy is indirectly resulting in larger imports of U.S. wheat-based products, including mixed doughs, pasta, biscuits, crackers, cakes and pastries, wheat gluten, and flour preparations, according to an article in the September issue of *AgExporter Magazine*, published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service.

"High rice support prices have resulted in drastic overproduction of rice, which the government has attempted to control by encouraging production of other crops, including wheat," according to James V. Parker, the U.S. minister-counselor for agricultural affairs in Tokyo. Japan, therefore, also maintains high wheat prices, at both the producer and resale levels.

"High Japanese wheat prices, coupled with the yen's strong purchasing power and the fact that domestic wheat (which accounts for about 16 percent of total consumption) has been of rather low quality in the past several years, has made it more economical to import processed wheat products," says Parker. "In short, Japanese policies have made imported wheat products a "better buy."

"Cake mixes and doughs are the category with the most growth in imports—over 25 percent during 1989," according to Parker. This is the area of most promise for U.S. exporters, who are the second largest suppliers of mixes and doughs, after Korea. Imports from the United States rose in 1989 to take a 30-percent slice of the Japanese market.

To avoid competition with domestic wheat products, Japan's Food Agency allows imports of wheat flour mixes only if they contain less than 85 percent wheat. Most of the non-cake mix imports are mixes for sweet dough-type products that use relatively weak flour and high ratios of sugar and powdered milk.

But don't look for the Japanese to be eating a lot of home-made Western-style bread. Japan still doesn't import much bread-type mix because of the maximum 85 percent wheat content allowed and because most Japanese bakers still aren't familiar with imported bread flour.

Lynn K. Goldsbrough (202) 382-9442
Issued Aug. 21, 1990

#

CAZ SNIFFS OUT COSTLY ANIMAL PEST

WASHINGTON—His name is Caz—short for Cazador, Spanish for hunter. His U.S. Department of Agriculture trainer wants him to search two sheep-carrying trucks.

Caz, an 80-pound brown and white German wired-haired retriever has been trained in Costa Rica to sniff out quarter-inch-long screwworm larvae that mature into flies. Screwworms have been eradicated from the United States and Mexico, but the flies still ravage livestock in every Central American country. They breed inside open wounds of any warmblooded animal, including dogs and cats, and can also infect humans. The larvae feed on the flesh of the host animal.

John B. Welch, the trainer, thinks dogs trained like Caz could be placed at quarantine stations to help inspectors keep screwworms from reinvading Mexico and the U.S.

“I don’t know of any other dog trained to do this job,” says Welch, an entomologist for USDA’s Agricultural Research Service. He is based at the agency’s Screwworm Research Laboratory in San Jose, Costa Rica’s capital.

If Caz is called upon, “he’ll be well prepared,” says Welch, who earlier sent the dog through 286 tests to be able to detect the larvae’s scent.

On this particular day, the dog eyes the two trucks, each holding three sheep. One of the six sheep has a larvae-infected wound. Awaiting orders, Caz shifts his gaze to Welch. “Find it,” the scientist says.

Caz quivers his nostrils first at one truck, then the other. Seconds later, the retriever fixes his attention on the second truck and places his front paws on the tailgate.

Welch gives the verbal reward, “Good dog!” accompanied by lots of hugs and pats on the head.

Over the three months it took Welch to train Caz, he challenged the dog to find wound-scented tennis balls or towels, pupae-scented tennis balls, infested animals and pupae. Out of all these tests, including 19 with farm animals, Caz missed only once, when he had bronchitis.

“Caz is trained not to bark at or jump on the animals,” Welch says. “He focuses his attention on the infested animal and ignores the others.” Now, he adds, Caz can even find screwworm larvae that have dropped out of a wound to seek a dark place to hide and pupate into the fly stage.

Screwworms were eliminated in the U.S. in 1966 and Mexico in 1988. Hundreds of billions of male flies were sterilized by small doses of radiation and released regularly over several years—a technique that ARS researchers pioneered in the 1950's.

When sterile males mated with native females in infested areas, the fly population decreased. Now the U.S.-Mexico Commission for Eradication of Screwworms has begun sterile releases in Central America, Guatemala and Belize, while continuing sterile releases in Mexico.

Welch sees dogs like Caz having a role at quarantine stations such as the three the U.S.-Mexico commission operates—two in the state of Chiapas bordering Guatemala and one in Veracruz. They are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, employing about 100 inspectors.

Each month, workers at the stations unload more than 25,000 head of cattle from trucks to check for screwworms. An inspection by several people takes about three minutes per animal.

These inspections cost the commission nearly \$1 million annually, according to Steve Smith, co-director of field operations for the eradication program. He is based in Mexico City. Welch says scent-detecting dogs could help save costs and heighten the efficiency of 24-hour operations in keeping screwworms from uninfested areas.

Sandy Miller Hays (301) 344-4089
Issued: August 21, 1990

#

FGIS SUNFLOWER OIL CALIBRATION PROGRAM FOUND TO BE ON THE MARK

WASHINGTON, Aug. 21—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Federal Grain Inspection Service has reviewed its sunflower oil certification program and found that current procedures accurately predict sunflower seed oil content.

Tests done by FGIS using data on 251 sunflower seed samples collected between 1986 and 1990 indicate close agreement between nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR), the official method used to determine the oil content of sunflower seeds, and solvent extraction reference methods. The average difference in oil content between NMR and solvent extraction was only .01 percent.

Based on these findings, FGIS determined that the present NMR calibration methods adequately predict the sunflower seed oil content and that no calibration adjustment is needed.

"This program is another example of the agency's commitment to providing objective, end-use quality information as accurate as possible," said FGIS Administrator John C. Foltz. "We invite buyers of oil seeds to take full advantage of the testing services FGIS provides, including determination of both oil and protein contents of soybeans."

For more information on the program, contact Steven Tanner, (202) 382-0216.

Dana Blatt (202) 382-0378

#

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES

WASHINGTON, Aug. 21—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

- long grain whole kernels, 8.31 cents per pound;
- medium grain whole kernels, 7.38 cents per pound;
- short grain whole kernels, 7.31 cents per pound;
- broken kernels, 4.16 cents per pound.

Based upon these prevailing world market prices for milled rice, rough rice world prices are estimated to be:

- long grain, \$5.22 per hundredweight;
- medium grain, \$4.75 per hundredweight;
- short grain, \$4.73 per hundredweight.

The prices announced are effective today at 3 p.m. EDT. The next scheduled price announcement will be made Aug. 28 at 3 p.m. EDT, although prices may be announced sooner if warranted.

Gene Rosera (202) 447-7923

#

FOREIGN FUNGUS TAKES ON MAJOR U.S. CROP PEST

WASHINGTON—The potato leafhopper, nemesis of crops from the Northeast through the Corn Belt, may someday be halted in its destructive wanderings by a fungus that's logged quite a few miles of its own, U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists say.

Imported from Europe and South America, the fungus *Zoophthora radicans* can kill a leafhopper in three to four days, according to entomologist Raymond I. Carruthers of USDA's Agricultural Research Service. After the leafhopper dies, the fungus spews spores that fall onto other leafhoppers and also sticks to leaf surfaces where the pests might cross.

As a natural alternative to chemical pesticides, the fungus could mean significant savings for farmers on control measures to combat the leafhopper, Carruthers said.

"Leafhoppers attack more than 200 crops, including potatoes and alfalfa," he said. "Farmers in the Northeast and Midwest probably apply more insecticides to control potato leafhoppers than any other pest in alfalfa."

"We can grow this pathogen relatively easily in liquid medium without having the insect at all," he continued. "We simply collect it, dry it, grind it up, bag it and refrigerate it so it lasts longer. When you want to use it, you just take it out, add water and it will produce spores that infect the insect."

Control of the potato leafhopper has been complicated in the past by the pest's migratory habits, according to Alan J. Sawyer, an ARS ecologist.

"It normally winters no further north than Louisiana, then comes up to attack the crops," he said. "These differences in infestation levels and arrival times, plus the lack of a year-round population of the pest, have made it difficult to use biological controls against the leafhopper."

In preliminary field tests in 1986, different types of *Z. radicans* were released in New York and Illinois. The pathogen in Illinois survived the winter, but the one in New York apparently did not.

"We applied it to the alfalfa foliage in the evening when the plants were damp from dew, but we don't know if farmers ultimately will use it that way," Carruthers said. "We're continuing our studies and hopefully we can develop better strategies for sustaining the fungus in the field."

Z. radicans entered the picture after Donald W. Roberts of the Boyce Thompson Institute (BTI) at Ithaca, New York, and Richard Soper of ARS obtained a grant to seek leafhopper control on cowpeas in Brazil.

“The leafhopper there is closely related to the leafhopper that’s a major pest in the United States,” said Carruthers, who works at ARS’ Plant Protection Research unit at Ithaca. Joint efforts between USDA and BTI led to the identification of a pathogen that would kill the Brazilian leafhopper. Carruthers said the pathogen was brought from Brazil to the United States, tested and found to be highly effective against the U.S. potato leafhopper.

Carruthers later located a slightly different strain of *Z. radicans* in Yugoslavia. He said he has worked with the Yugoslavian strain because it is easier to grow in the lab and produces more spores.

Sandy Miller Hays (301) 344-4089
Issued: August 22, 1990

#

USDA ISSUES REPORT ON COVERED HOPPER RAILCAR OWNERSHIP

WASHINGTON, Aug. 22—The U.S. grain industry depends extensively on covered hopper cars for transportation of grain, yet the seven largest firms own very few railcars, according to a report issued today by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Office of Transportation.

“Although these firms accounted for more than 75 percent of all U.S. grain shipped by rail in 1986, they owned less than 2 percent of the nation’s covered hopper car fleet in January 1990,” said Martin F. Fitzpatrick, Jr., OT administrator.

Fitzpatrick pointed out that the largest grain firms rely extensively on railroadcontrolled cars and cars they lease. “Leasing allows grain firms to reduce their cash outlays and limit their need for specialized management skills necessitated by ownership.”

The OT report, “Covered Hopper Car Ownership: Who Owns the Grain Cars? Who Moves the Grain?” identifies both private and railroad covered hopper car owners along with ownership concentration. This ownership data, combined with data on rail grain origination, identifies the key players in the nation’s rail transportation market. Taken together,

the figures yield useful insights into many of the policy issues that affect U.S. rail grain service.

"The adequacy of the nation's covered hopper car fleet continues to be debated by grain shippers, rail carriers and others interested in the movement of U.S. grains," Fitzpatrick said. "This report should provide valuable data for those interested in this issue."

The report categorizes covered hopper car ownership as either railroad or private and further subdivides private ownership among railcar leasing companies, agricultural use and non-agricultural use. Based on the available data, ownership appears to be concentrated in the hands of a few large railroads and railcar leasing companies.

Fitzpatrick said that nearly 95 percent of all rail-transported grain in the United States is moved in "C113" covered hopper cars, 81 percent of which are owned by railroads and railcar leasing companies. "The remainder of these covered hopper cars are owned privately by shippers." Copies of the report can be obtained from USDAOT, P.O. Box 96575, Washington, D.C., 20090-6575, or by calling (202) 653-6296.

Larry Mark (202) 447-3977

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FIRST TIMBER BRIDGE AWARDS COMPETITION ANNOUNCED

WASHINGTON, Aug. 22—Many highway bridges of the future will be made of wood, if the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service and four major wood products trade associations have anything to say about it. The five organizations are sponsoring the first national awards competition for timber bridges, the kind they hope will be built to replace obsolete, deficient, or worn out bridges on our nation's roads and highways.

Michael Ritter, Forest Service engineer and author of the agency's in-house design manual for timber bridges, said the competition is designed to stimulate innovative and efficient use of modern timber bridges by recognizing significant accomplishments in their design and construction. Timber bridges are built today using modern wood systems and products, including stress-laminated solid-sawn designs, glued, laminated timber, and structural composite lumber.

The designers, contractors, and owners of the winning bridges will receive personalized awards, and a distinctive plaque will be placed on each award-winning bridge during a ceremony at the bridge site. Winners will be selected by a jury with expertise in timber bridge design.

According to the Federal Highway Administration, about 240,000 U.S. highway bridges are obsolete or functionally deficient, requiring extensive rehabilitation or complete replacement. Many of these bridges span 50 feet or less, making them ideal for rehabilitation or replacement using modern wood products.

Ritter said modern wood bridges are strong, light, and economical, and resist damage from the de-icing agents used to keep roads clear in winter. Wood products used in bridges today can last 50 years or more and require little maintenance, he said. Timber bridges are also easy to build and look good, particularly in natural surroundings. And unlike many building materials used today, Ritter said, wood is an abundant, renewable resource, grown on one-third of the nation's area.

The timber bridge awards will be presented annually, beginning this year. Categories include pedestrian/light vehicular bridges, vehicular bridges spanning less than 40 feet, vehicular bridges spanning more than 40 feet, and rehabilitation of an existing bridge using wood.

Timber bridges opened to traffic during 1987, 1988, and 1989 will be eligible for this year's awards. For information on the contest, write to the American Institute of Timber Construction, 11818 Mill Plain Blvd., Suite 415, Vancouver, WA 98684-5092. Entry kits will be available to timber bridge owners, designers and contractors by September 1990.

The award program is co-sponsored by the AITC, the National Forest Products Association, the Southern Pine Marketing Council, the Western Wood Products Association, and the Forest Service.

Richard Lindeborg (202) 447-5576

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TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ELIGIBLE FOR WHEAT UNDER EEP

WASHINGTON, Aug. 22—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced an opportunity for sales of 130,000 metric tons of wheat to Trinidad and Tobago under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Export Enhancement Program.

Sales of wheat will be made to buyers in Trinidad and Tobago through normal commercial channels at competitive prices. The export sales will be facilitated through the payment of bonuses in the form of commodities from the inventory of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation. The subsidy will enable U.S. exporters to compete at commercial prices in the Trinidadian and Tobagonian market. This is the 108th initiative announced under the EEP.

This allocation will be valid for a one-year period as provided for in the invitation for offers. Details of the program, including an invitation for offers from exporters, will be issued in the near future.

For more information call Mark Rowse, (202) 382-9240, or Larry McElvain, (202) 447-3224. For a tape-recorded message announcing the issuance of invitations under EEP call the CCC Operations Hotline, (202) 447-2042.

Sally Klusaritz (202) 447-3448

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USDA CONFERENCE, NOV. 27-29, TO ASSESS FARM PROSPECTS FOR 1991

WASHINGTON, Aug. 22—The outlook for farmers and consumers in 1991, a year of many changes for agriculture, will be discussed here Nov. 27-29, at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 67th annual Outlook Conference, assistant secretary of agriculture for economics Bruce L. Gardner announced today.

"New domestic policies for farming and dramatic changes abroad raise a number of questions about the climate for agriculture in the year ahead," Gardner said. "At the Outlook Conference prominent authorities will discuss the likely impact of these developments and leading analysts will assess the outlook for farmers, consumers and farm commodities."

The conference will begin at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 27, with topical sessions. At 10:30 a.m., Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter will present the keynote address and a high-ranking U.S. official will discuss current world events and U.S. foreign policy. Tuesday afternoon sessions will focus on 1991 U.S. farm and economic prospects and on the trade outlook in light of the changes taking place in Europe and the Soviet Union.

Forecasts for grains, oilseeds, livestock, fibers, sweeteners and other major farm commodities will be covered in concurrent sessions on Wednesday, Nov. 28. Other Wednesday sessions will cover topical issues ranging from food prices and labeling to the regulation of farm chemicals.

On Thursday morning, Nov. 29, leading experts and policymakers will discuss the search for solutions to environmental and food safety problems. Then top government officials will address the current energy situation and the future of alternative fuels from plant sources. The conference will adjourn at midday.

To receive program and registration details, including information on ordering audio-tape cassettes and the conference proceedings, telephone (202) 447-3050, or write Outlook Conference, Room 5143-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-3900.

Chart on next page.

OUTLOOK CONFERENCE PROGRAM (PRELIMINARY)

U.S Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.

TUESDAY, NOV. 27

Location: Jefferson Auditorium	107-A	Cafeteria
A.M.		
8:30	Rural Development and Credit Update	Impact of Soviet Transportation System on U.S. Farm Exports
		Dietary Guidelines and New Food Surveys

Location: Jefferson Auditorium

10:30	Keynote Session: Agriculture in a World of Change
P.M.	
1:15	Overview of 1991 Economic and Agricultural Outlook
3:15	Panel: Trade Prospects in a World of Change

5:30 Reception (Administration Building)

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 28

Location: Jefferson Auditorium	107-A	3501-S	Cafeteria	Auditors Building
AM.				
8:30	Food Grains	Cotton	Family Economics	Dairy
				Forest Products
10:30	Feed Grains	Food Prices and Food Labeling	Tobacco	Aquaculture
P.M.				
1:30	Oilseeds	Fruits and Vegetables	Ornamental Horticulture	Farm Income, Inputs and Structure
3:15	Livestock and Poultry	Technology and Regulation of Pesticides and Fertilizers	Sweeteners	New Crops and New Products

THURSDAY, NOV. 29

Location: Jefferson Auditorium

A.M.	
8:30	Food Safety and Environmental Dilemmas: Search for Solutions
10:45	Energy Issues for Agriculture
P.M.	
12:30	Conference Adjourns

Raymond L. Bridge (202) 447-5447

THIS WEEK'S HONEY-LOAN REPAYMENT LEVELS UNCHANGED

WASHINGTON, Aug. 23—Producers may repay their 1989 honey price-support loans at the following levels, according to Keith D. Bjerke, executive vice president of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation:

Weekly Honey-loan Repayment Levels, color and class, cents per pound, 1989 crop Table

White	40.0
Extra-light Amber	37.0
Light Amber	36.0
Amber	35.0
Nontable	33.0

The weekly repayment level for 1990-crop honey is 38.0 cents per pound for all colors, table and nontable grades.

Levels are unchanged from those announced last week.

Producers who redeem their honey pledged as loan collateral by repaying their honey-price support loans at these levels may not repledge the same honey as collateral for another loan.

Jane K. Phillips (202) 447-7601 8:00 am-4:30 pm EST
John C. Ryan (202) 447-8207 4:30 pm-5:30 pm EST

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USDA ANNOUNCES MEETING OF SCRAPIE NEGOTIATED RULEMAKING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

WASHINGTON, Aug. 23—The U.S. Department of Agriculture will hold the fourth meeting of the scrapie negotiated rulemaking advisory committee Sept. 7-8 here, to develop a program to combat scrapie, a disease of sheep and goats.

The meeting is open to the public and will be held 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sept. 7 in the offices of The Conservation Foundation, 1250 24th Street, N.W.; and Sept. 8 at the Westin Hotel, 2401 M Street, N.W. A notice of the meeting is scheduled for publication in the Aug. 23 Federal Register.

Scrapie is a progressively fatal disease of sheep and goats that attacks the central nervous system. Currently there is no live animal diagnostic test or treatment for the disease.

The meeting will bring together technical specialists, representatives from USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the sheep industry, and others interested in scrapie issues.

The meeting will focus on administrative issues and revisions of the proposed scrapie certification plan for scrapie control presented at the last meeting of the advisory committee.

The negotiated rulemaking process uses an independent facilitator, follows guidelines established by the committee, negotiates in good faith and aims at reaching a consensus on which all involved parties can agree.

Public participation in the meeting will be allowed during announced periods. Anyone wishing to file a written statement with the committee may do so before, during or after the meeting by sending it to Helene Wright, Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, Room 866, Federal Building, 6506 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782. Statements must be received on or before Sept. 21, and should refer to the scrapie negotiated rulemaking advisory committee.

Natalie Bosecker (301) 436-4898

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